

dimension of the scalpel and depth slightly greater than that of the minor cross-sectional dimension of the scalpel, the length of said scalpel recess being such that the scalpel blade is located within one of said portions irrespective of the position of the scalpel in the scalpel recess, and said instrument holding container having inclined guides for guiding a scalpel placed therein to said instrument recess, the arrangement being such that a scalpel received within said instrument recess is position therein to be easily accessible for re-use during surgical procedures and such that the cutting portion thereof is not directed towards the opening of the instrument recess whereby an operator's fingers are substantially prevented from contacting said cutting portion.

REMARKS

Claim 15 has been amended pursuant to the Examiner's suggestion in the Office Action mailed Sept. 13, 1999. Claim 2 and claims 4-11 have been amended to properly depend from, and accord with, claim 15. Claim 19 is a method claim as discussed by Applicant's counsel and the Examiner during a telephone conference on Dec. 13, 1999. Claim 16 is the same claim as originally entered and in the same form as found allowable by the Examiner in his Office Action mailed March 8, 1999.

It is believed that the amended claims and new claim 19 are allowable, as is claim 16 as previously determined by the Examiner. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner enter the amendments, withdraw the rejections, and allow passage of the application to issue.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fees, including any extension fees, which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 10-0435 with reference to our matter 20253-60398.

Respectfully submitted,



Kenneth J. Waite
Registration No. 45,189
Attorney for Applicant

KJW
(317) 231-7204
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

INDSO2 KJW 293669

